

Younger Drivers

Chapter 1



The population of younger drivers (16-24 year olds) in Maine is relatively small. This group represents only 13% of licensed Maine drivers, yet these drivers are involved in more than 36% of all crashes. In addition to this increased likelihood of being involved in a crash, they are also more likely to be involved in severe crashes; those involving personal injury or death. The injury rate for younger drivers is 3 times higher than that for drivers older than 24. There is a direct relationship between the age of the driver and the risk of a crash or injury.

Statewide

- Teen drivers aged 16-18 represent less than 3% of the licensed drivers in Maine, but account for approximately 12% of those with serious crash related injuries.
- 16 year old drivers are eight times more likely to be injured in a motor vehicle crash than drivers 25 years or older. 17 year olds are five times more likely.
- Motor vehicle crashes remain the leading cause of death for children and youth, aged 1-24 in Maine.
- Younger drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes directly related to risk taking behaviors, such as speeding and alcohol use. Teen fatality rates are highest (on a fatality per estimated total vehicle miles traveled basis) during the hours of 10PM to 5AM.
- Younger drivers are more likely to be involved in crashes resulting from distracted driving.

Maine's Graduated License Program

In 2003 the Maine Legislature passed a bill establishing a 3-step graduated license system for new drivers under the age of 21. This bill was designed to address the safety of the youngest drivers and intended to allow new drivers to gain valuable driving experience under lower risk conditions.

For more details on Maine's Graduated License Program, please see section one in the appendix.

